

178 EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
REFORMER,

Zola sat reading in the manager's private room, and on the fall of the curtain his friends repaired thither to inform him that, apart from a little hissing, everything had gone off satisfactorily. Nevertheless, the critics attacked the play, an English writer, George Augustus Sala, evincing particular distress in a long article which recalled Sarcey's customary brief verdict: " That man Zola makes me ill."¹

But all Paris had read " L'Assommoir" as a novel, and wished to see it on the stage;² and, besides, even the critics could not deny that Madame Helene Petit's impersonation of the unhappy Gervaise was a great personal triumph. Thus crowds flocked to the Theatre de l'Ambigu, whose director, Henri Chabrillat, an ex-journalist and novelist, who had commanded the Francs-tireurs de la Presse during the Franco-German War, suddenly found himself making a fortune.

In honour of the staff and company of the Ambigu, the authors of the play ended by giving a ball at the Elyse'e Montmartre, which, by the way, figured in Zola's story; and Mr. George Moore, the well-known author of "A Mummer's Wife" and "Esther Waters," has related that his first meeting with Zola — of whom he became for several years the chief English supporter

— occurred
at this particular entertainment.³ Mr. Moore
— who had
then only produced his "Flowers of Passion,"
and was
therefore known in Parisian literary and
art circles as
a young poet — attended the ball dressed
as a Parisian

¹ See gala's "Paris herself Again," London, Vizetelly & Co.,
1879 *et seq.*

² It mil *Toe* remembered that Charles Reade prepared an
English version
entitled "Drink."

^a "My Impressions of Zola," by George Moore, in "The
English
Illustrated Magazine," February, 1894,